

# SINGLE SPIES DIRECTORS NOTES

I have long been a fan of Alan Bennett. In fact, ever since I was a teenager in the early sixties and rejoiced in the anarchic humour of 'Beyond the Fringe', satirical sketches which marked a watershed between pre and post-war comedy writing.

These two plays exemplify Bennett at his best. The title tells us that here we have parallel stories about two 'single gentlemen' both of whom are double agents. But it also, significantly, echoes a quotation from "Hamlet":

"When sorrows come, they come not single spies,  
But in battalions." ( Act 1V Scene 5 )

This subtly reminds us of the tragedy of lives wasted as a consequence of poorly-judged or impetuous decisions. Just as Shakespeare's play explores ideas of honour and allegiance, spying and betrayal, this is also the territory of Bennett's plays. Except that Bennett resolutely denies his main characters the status of 'tragic hero'. Instead, we are shown two former spies now in middle age. Trapped by the consequences of decisions they took in their youth, they still demonstrate the same fatal flaws of vanity and conceit.

When these plays were first performed in the 1980s, audiences were familiar with the names of Burgess, MacLean, Philby and Blunt; the Berlin Wall had not yet fallen and the Politburo still controlled the 'Eastern Bloc'. The 'Cold War' still dominated east-west relations. Now, nearly thirty years on, the story of the 'Cambridge Spies' is relatively unknown to people who grew up after the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe. However, the story of these men from privileged backgrounds, who were seduced by Marxist principles and were persuaded to spy for the Soviet Union, is a fascinating one. As Bennett himself has said, it is both "funny and sad".

Directing these plays has been a hugely enjoyable experience. I hope that you enjoy them too.

## Jane Railton

The Director would also like to thank the following people for their advice, expertise and practical help:

Lyn Adams, Bill Bosworth, Bill Butler, Dave Crisp, Hilary Diaper, Joe Fallowell, Pete Gillam, Bob Howorth, Barry Jackson, Julia Krukov, Ruth Miller, Keith Railton, Karl Stafford, Steve Withers and Bill Young.

## Criterion Lottery Fund and Draw

Funds for the theatre are raised through our Lottery Fund. Please consider buying a number (or or more than one) for the small sum of £5 per number per month. Please contact **Mike Tooley** on 024 7667 3789 or [mike\\_tooley@hotmail.com](mailto:mike_tooley@hotmail.com) for details.

**Remember... you've got to be in it to win it!**

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Our next production:



## Punk Rock

by Simon Stephens

Thursday 23rd - Saturday 25th February

William Carlisle has the world at his feet but its weight on his shoulders. He is intelligent, articulate and f\*\*\*ked. In the library of a fee-paying grammar school, William and his fellow Sixth-Formers are preparing for their mock A-Levels while navigating the pressures of teenage life. They are educated and aspirational young people, but step-by-step, the dislocation, disjunction and latent aggression is revealed.

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This is a notice to members

If you have any comments about your experience at the Criterion Theatre, please email Louise at [comments@criteriontheatre.co.uk](mailto:comments@criteriontheatre.co.uk)



Supported by Shortland Horne



# SINGLE SPIES

by Alan Bennett

Contains smoking on stage  
under The Smoke-free  
(Exemptions and Vehicles)  
Regulations 2007

**A witty portrayal  
of two of the most  
intriguing double  
agents in British  
history, beautifully  
realised in this  
double bill.**

An Englishman Abroad & A Question of Attribution

# Programme

Produced in association with Samuel French Ltd

# SINGLE SPIES



## Cathryn Bowler

Last year's production of *The 39 Steps* marks Cathryn's return to the stage after a production of a different kind - a gorgeous little girl, *Harriet Matilda* - in 2010. Previous productions at the Criterion include *The Blue Room* (*Girl, Au Pair, Married Woman, Model, Actress*), *Brassed Off* (*Sandra*), *Hedda Gabler* (*Hedda*), *Four Nights in Knaresborough* (*Catherine*), *Memory of Water* (*Mary*), *Oliver Twist* (*Nancy*), *The Crucible* (*Goody Proctor*) and *Life x 3* (*Sonya*) and *Educating Rita* (*Rita*) at *The Loft* in *Leamington Spa* (directed by *Phil Reynolds*).



## Phil Reynolds

Phil has previously appeared at the Criterion as *Noel Coward* in *Red Hot and Cole* and in *Shakespeare's Henry V* as the eponymous monarch. Elsewhere, he has performed with most of the area's theatre companies at one time or another, but principally at the *Loft Theatre* in *Leamington Spa* where his recent roles include *Sweeney* in *Dealer's Choice*, *Alan Turing* in *Breaking the Code*, *Jim* in *The Weir*, *Mike* in *The Memory of Water*, *Lloyd Dallas* in *Noises Off*, *Rudyard Kipling* in *My Boy Jack* and *Martin Dysart* in *Equus*.



## Elliot Relton-Williams

Elliot is currently attending *City College* on an acting course. His acting experience includes: *Taplow* in *"The Browning Version"* various youth productions at the *Belgrade* including *"Spring Awakening"*, some short films and a radio play. Elliot is also a keen roller blader and fixed gear bike enthusiast. His latest role was *Billy* in *"On Golden Pond"* at the *Talisman Theatre*. This is Elliot's second production with the Criterion.



## Jordan Jackson

Jordan is currently attending *Sixth Form*. He has a strong interest in the arts, enjoying music, film and theatre and he plans to start a career based around these things. Although he doesn't have much practical experience, he is keen to improve his skills as a performer. This is Jordan's first play with the Criterion.



## Mark Wiszowaty

Mark began acting in earnest in 1976, playing the *"Telephone Man"* in *Neil Simon's "Barefoot in the Park"*. He joined the Criterion in 1981, appearing first as the *"Kapo"* in *"Bent"*. Favourite roles since then have included *Alan Turing* in *"Breaking the Code"* (1991) and *"No 4"* in *"Twelve Angry Men"* (2001) - most recently *"Rusty Charlie"* in *"Guys and Dolls"*. He has also done professional film work as a presenter (*"Long Lost Lines"* - *Nest Films*, released 2011). And is hoping to branch out and direct an original film this year, from his own screenplay.



## Anne-marie Greene

Anne-marie made her Criterion debut performance in *The Darling Buds of May* in 2005. Since then she has appeared in a number of plays including most recently *The Browning Version/Still Life*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Arabian Nights* and *Guys and Dolls*. She directed for the first time in July with *Sure Thing*, part of the *Festival 50* plays and additionally can often be found behind (or in front of the bar), backstage doing props, and front of stage in the *Box Office*.



## Peter Brooks

A long-standing member of the Criterion, Peter has performed a wide variety of roles over (too many) years, most recently a *Chicago gangster* in *"Guys and Dolls"*. Previous associations with *Alan Bennett* include playing the great man himself in *"The Lady in the Van"*. He hopes that this performance provides a witty and entertaining insight into a peculiar and fascinating period in English history (he is old enough to remember most of it!).



## Andrew Tyrer

Andrew has been a member of the Criterion Theatre since 2006 and has appeared in several productions including *Alan Bennett's Lady in the Van*. His last appearance at the Criterion was in the *Arabian Nights*. Andrew has enjoyed the rehearsals for *Single Spies* very much especially as the themes of both plays deal with the *Cold War* when things were not quite as they seemed.

## CAST LIST

### An Englishman Abroad

Coral	Cathryn Bowler
Burgess	Phil Reynolds
Tolya	Elliot Relton-Williams
Tailor	Andrew Tyrer
Shop Assistant	Jordan Jackson

### A Question of Attribution

Blunt	Mark Wiszowaty
HMQ	Anne-marie Greene
Chubb	Peter Brooks
Restorer	Andrew Tyrer
Phillips	Jordan Jackson
Colin	Elliot Relton-Williams

### Director

### Jane Railton

## CREW

Set Design	Simon Sharpe
Set Build	Simon Sharpe, Kevin Woods, Pete Bagley, Judy Sharpe, Frances Dixon, Mike Tooley, Dave Holmes
Set Paint	Judy Talbot, Marian McGlone, Judy Sharpe, Carol Mead, Doreen Belton
Sound Design	Dave Cornish
Lighting Design	Ian Knight
Props	Chrisanthi Jones, Peter Jones, Stella Gabriel, Chris Gabriel
Costume	Maureen Liggins, Pam Coleman
Prompt	Shirley Jobson
Projection	Clair Henrywood, Bill Butler